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Andrew Sloan Draper.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

COMING STEPS IN ITS EVOLUTION

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VERY, very few universities have enjoyed such a strong and rapid development as the University of Illinois. New, large, and substantial buildings have appeared each year. The faculties and students have increased in numbers so rapidly that we each feel our acquaintance is very limited. We have affiliated outside professional schools until it seems to be the natural order. We have started new lines of work, and expanded the equipment until we have created an organization and secured the facilities for prosecuting almost every phase of research and of advanced instruction.

Very naturally some wonder whether we are not coming to a limit in development; others find amusement in castles in the air which are wholly fanciful.

There is no limit, save in resources, to the evolution of a university, but a university cannot carry on its work in castles which do not rest upon the ground. We stand for the higher educational work of a great, rich, strong State, capable of aiding us in any measure it thinks good. We are commissioned to help on the intellectual advance, not of a class, but of the mass, and we are particularly enjoined to preach the gospel of work, and to help on the great industries upon which the wealth and strength of the State rest. We have prospered because we have followed the terms of our commission, and because we have not quarreled among ourselves, but have had a good fellowship and a correct and courageous spirit while pursuing the State's highest work. We shall continue to prosper and shall grow beyond the confident

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expectations of all who know the difficulties of putting up buildings on the ground and of binding all of our activities together into a symmetrical and comprehensive whole, if we just continue to do in the larger field as we have been doing in the smaller one.

It is hazardous to attempt to name the specific steps which are likely to be taken in the future unfolding of an institution. The writer is no better able to do that than any one else who has substantially his opportunities for knowledge of University affairs. He does not determine what shall be done next, and he is no better at foreseeing than others may be. The directions in which a university shall unfold are determined by the common sentiment and the composite action of a vast number of people, or the thing which is unfolded will not be much of a university. But the writer has some unusual opportunities for discerning the concentration of sentiment, and is not afraid of any dire consequences of misjudging so uncertain a factor in the almost wholly unknown. So premising that as to any matters not yet fully decided he shall not be expected to sustain any intimations here given unless, when discussions are closed, it shall seem best to do so, he ventures to foretell some coming events.

Four important movements bearing upon the future of the University plant are determined upon and will be executed very soon. First, provision has been made for a liberal extension of the equipment of the College of Engineering : the results of this will not be very manifest before next year, for ample time will be taken to guard against mistakes so far as possible ; but before long the results will be very noticeable. Second, provision has been made for a fine extension of the equipment of the College of Agriculture : and in the next two or three years a series of attractive buildings extending east and west along the south side of the south campus will be erected, and they promise to be an important addition to the University group. Third, a Woman's Building will be erected next year, facing the south campus and Wright street, which is bound to add a beautiful structure to the University settlement, and some new features to University life. Fourth, the south campus is to be enlarged and made impressive. The road running east and west in front of the barns has been extended to the limits of our grounds opening into Fourth street in Champaign and itno Lincoln avenue in Urbana. The south gate and the road leading to it have been closed in order to prepare the way for carrying out the new plans about agricultural buildings. The road in front of the Observatory has been closed and put into lawn. New roads

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in extension of Wright street on the west and Mathews avenue on the east have been or are being opened. All lands in the quadrangle bounded by these several roads and University Hall, and all the lands extending out to the Forestry, are to be cleared of the small buildings, and of fruit trees, and of growing crops, and put into lawn except eight small plats east of the Observatory which the Experiment Station people think imperative to their work for some time yet. In other words, a great expanse of the most beautiful landscape in Illinois is to be put into the campus, improved from time to time, dedicated to the human interests, and given over to the outdoor life of the University. We are exceedingly fortunate in our land holdings, and are going to make the most of the fact. It is doubtful if any other American university has such a beautiful campus, or such an outlook for a still more beautiful and impressive one.

Now as to the possible or probable steps which have not yet been decided upon. A serious and pressing need is an Assembly Hall capable of seating three thousand people. In plan it seems to me that it should be something between an opera house and a church, with something of the comfort of the former, and something of the dignity and stateliness of the latter. It should have a capacious platform: it might well house the School of Music; and it should have the finest pipe organ in the region.

The Library Building will at an early day be required for the exclusive use of the Library and Library School. The time is not remote when the stacks will not only need to be enlarged by taking in the room overhead occupied by the school, which has always been the intention, but when the wing of the building containing the stacks will have to be extended to the south for the accommodation of the larger libraries which we are going to have. Moreover, the administrative offices need better accommodations. These things will lead to an Administration Building.

The department of physics is in the Engineering Building only as a matter of convenience, and because that is the best place we have had for it. It does not belong there, it requires special accommodations, and the engineering work needs the space. This means a new Physics Laboratory and natural accessories.

The College of Science needs a substantial addition to its present building, or a separate structure for housing its collections, and perhaps propagating materials for its work. It is a need which is likely in time to be realized.

It is a somewhat common thought that University Hall, or, as

the writer likes to call it, "the Old Building," has about outlived its usefulness and ought to disappear. It ought never to disappear. It probably will not, unless by fire, and it is to be devoutly hoped that such a calamity will not fall upon us. It is a spacious and a very useful building. It has associations which are of exceeding interest to many generations of students, and which will multiply and deepen indefinitely. Moreover it stands for the beginnings of the University, its early architecture and life. The front at least should be retained for all time substantially as now. I have often thought that a south side might well be erected for the building so as to complete the square. It might not be impracticable to place the needed Assembly Hall in such a new side. The open court in the center might be paved with asphalt or cement, with a fountain at the center, and a "fence" where students could roost and swap stories between times. If in addition to all this we should cut down the front entrance to the ground and build an arcade through the present structure and extend it through the proposed south side so as to make walks and command views clear through, and so connect Burrill avenue north and south, we would add a unique and pleasing feature to our University city without destroying anything we ought to retain. We might even go further and close Burrill avenue as a carriage way, and convert it into a broad walk clear through our splendid campus, and so secure our grounds more completely to University uses, and promote that scholastic atmosphere which the work of higher education requires for virile growth. All this may or may not be among the coming events.

Certainly there is to be a new outfit of grand stand and bleachers on Illinois Field one of these days. Some "Old Grad," or some good friend specially interested in athletics, ought to build them for us, or the Athletic Association ought to start a crusade for the money to do it with. If in connection there could be secured a big "batting cage" for baseball so much the better, because so much the better for the batter.

Almost as certainly there is to be a chime of bells in the tower of the Library Building. We are waiting a rather long time, but some good friend who loves music and can realize the influence of such an acquisition upon our life will yet give the bells to us.

It is unnecessary to think about other structures at this time. Time may help the thinking and make it clearer. But it may be worth while to predict that in all new structures there will be purer and more typical architecture. There is but one building,—

possibly two,—which stands for a type in architecture. This has been no one's fault. We are under obligations to our own department of architecture that we have got on as well as we have. But we have not been free in the matter. We have got our buildings out of hard conditions. Often the main question has been not what the architecture of a new building should be, but rather whether we should have the new building at all or not. Sometimes we have accepted mongrel or meaningless architecture to avoid something positively frightful. We are now in little danger from the old sources, however. There is a certain safety in largeness, when no one man, or no small combination with some selfish end in mind and pretending to know so much that isn't so, can exert control or inflict hurt. In a great University policies have to be settled by discussion in the University forum. Discussion helps the right. The time has come to contend, to fight if need be, for purer, more dignified and attractive University architecture, and accordingly it may be confidently expected.

What may be anticipated in the way of attendance? That is the last thing for us to worry about now. The registration this year is likely to exceed four thousand,—something like 2,500 at the seat of the University, and 1,600 in the professional departments in Chicago. We are not ambitious for a further increase in numbers: we do not care to absorb other professional schools. We have all that can be desired in the way of attendance. All we care for now is the largest possible usefulness. We want to bring the level of this great body of students up to the highest possible plane of intellectual virility, of professional efficiency, of good stalwart, fearless, balanced citizenship. We want to break out some new roads in learning. We want to apply the latest and truest knowledge to the industrial and commercial and political life of the State. The students through whom to do this are upon us. We have not to look for more, but to do the most we can for the ones who are here. But more will come. There is little reason to doubt the attendance of say four thousand students here at the seat of the University within another ten years.

The only reasons for any doubt lie in the possibility that the responsible authorities may not stand up to their work as they should in requiring that students shall be prepared for college work in the local high schools to the fullest capacity of those schools, and in aiding those schools to attain the highest efficiency; in requiring that idlers shall not be in the way of the serious; and in providing instruction of the highest order for the studious. And

possibly in the other fact that increasing numbers may not be able to secure suitable rooms and nourishing food at reasonable cost.

The difficulty about homes is a serious one. Too often rooms are not what they should be, and food is not as nourishing as it might be. And the effort to make the charge excessive is constant. The University has always tried to avoid the responsibility of starting a system of dormitories, but may eventually have to come to it. It has been hoped, and is still hoped, that the surplus capital, of which there is plenty, in the adjacent cities would build suitable apartment houses, near the campus, to meet the needs of the faculty and students; that common sentiment would gradually improve the living, and that rates would have some consideration for the worthy who are struggling against odds to secure a liberal education.

This is, in the main, the uncertain factor in reckoning upon future attendance of students at this University. As it may be eliminated, it doubtless will be. If so, there is little reason to doubt that inside of another ten years the attendance at the University proper will reach four or five thousand, and that, with the professional schools, which are as legitimately and completely a part of the University as any other part, we shall be, so far as numbers are concerned, among the first three or four of American universities. Established, unlike any other, with the departments which thrive best away from a large city located in a rural environment, and with our great medical departments at the heart of one of the greatest cities, indeed at the very largest center of medical education in the world, we might easily come to be, in point of numbers, the largest University in America.

But we readily see that the largest is not necessarily the strongest or the greatest. Of infinitely more importance than anything else is the quality of the instruction, and the spirit of the students. The level of scholarship must be high, and tne quest for new truth general and serious, the ideals must be noble, the organization must be comprehensive, the work must apply to the circumstances of a constituency, before a university can be strong or great. In these regards we are likely to see early and very decided advances.

Because we say that we are to advance to the best university ideals it would be thoroughly unjust to infer that the work of the University has been of a low grade. On the contrary, its work has been high, and earnest, and its graduates are standing up well, exerting their full meed of influence, and winning their full share of

success on all fields of world experience. Our entrance requirements have averaged as high as those of any university west of the Alleghenies; we have just made one decided advance in requirements, and ordered another in the fall of 1905. But in these years of rapid growth, and under our system of accredited schools, some students have come to us wtihout adequate preparation, or any sufficient understanding of what they were coming into. In the College of Agriculture the students have come from the rural districts having no high schools, and it has been necessary to admit a large number of "specials" there, or to withhold the work from the only candidates who want it, and the very ones whom we want to have it.

But we are not afraid of the accredited school relationship. Ninety per cent of the students who come to us under it are very well prepared. The others fail and withdraw: they may get some good: they do us no great harm. Many of the ninety per cent would not go to college at all but for our accredited relationship with their high schools. It will not be necessary to open the doors of the College of Agriculture any wider than we have done. Any way, and generally, it is quite as well for a university to give students their chance. If we "weed them out" in the freshman year, and see that the weak and frivolous do not hinder the capable and serious ones, and if we make sure that all who get our degrees and honors deserve before they get them we shall not permit much harm, and we shall do more good than if we follow a narrow, or a snippy course. But the time is at hand to "weed out" more unhesitatingly and decisively. As the time for it is at hand the change will soon come.

Again, our many new students have required many new professors and instructors. Under the necessities of the case many of them have been young in years and experience. But they have in general been selected with care. Some have failed, but many are making it finely. Moreover we have been hard pressed for means: our very growth has made us poor: and other institutions with more money have enticed some good ones from us. Now we are in the "trying out" period. Our teachers have, as a rule, had the best training in the foremost schools of the world. As a rule they are growing, showing splendid capacity and spirit. It must be so, or they must give way to others who will, for the life blood of the University is in its teaching. We are in a position now to be even more exacting when we call new members to our faculties. We are gathering the equipment in the libraries ($20,000 each year for libraries now) and laboratories, which stimulates

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teachers and attracts the best men from other institutions. And happily we are in a position to prevent another university from taking a desirable teacher from us by an offer of more money, unless under all the circumstances we think it as well that he should go.

So, among the early steps which we may count upon, will be a decisive advance to higher ground. As we go up the hill the scholarship of the University will strengthen with the effort, and our prominence will attract scholars and students from all parts of the world.

But we cannot take these steps up this hill with mere amiability and a passive acceptance of what others do. The heavy stick, as well as the soft voice, will be in requisition. The city in which the writer used to live was built upon hills. He knows something about hills. If there was a particularly heavy task to be performed it was common to say that "it would be like rolling hogsheads of molasses up State street in the winter time." We have some very heavy loads to carry up the hill,—heavier than many are accustomed to see, but we can carry them to the very top, if we have nothing but the adancement of learning and the good of the people of Illinois in our minds, if we keep our feet upon the earth, and our heads cool, and if we all lift together.

A. S. Draper.

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